

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Approved

September 13, 2022

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday September 13, 2022 at 7:00pm.

Commission Members: Phil Lasker, Shirley Canniff, Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Scott Walker, Sarah Carrier and Josh Fenollosa. Recreation Director Joe Connelly was also present.

Anticipated Speakers: Steve Moore, Brian McBride, Beth Melofchik, Catherine Garnett, Larry Slotnick

Preliminary Matter: Phil Lasker, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call and read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Mr. Lasker.

Open Forum:

- Ms. Melofchik – Russell St. Expressed concern for the degradation of the forested woodland area at Hill's Hill and the native trees thriving in the area.
- Mr. Mc Bride – Looking for more information on the process of developing a proposal for Hill's Hill.
- Mr. Moore – Piedmont St. After a walk through Hill's Hill, he feels that there is room for compromise if the space is reconfigured. Ex: Repositioning the soccer field.

FY24 CPA Requests:

At the last meeting the Commission formulated Capital requests discussing feasibility studies and ADA compliance. Parallel Park is anticipated to receive most of the needed funding from CPA.

Multi-Year Plan:

Menotomy Rocks Park playground - \$300,000. Stantec has advised that this would not cover a full playground renovation.

Turkey Hill - \$30,000 for access project including signage.

Hill's Hill - \$400,000 for design, construction documents, construction oversight and construction. Design fees include initial design through public meetings and final design. The Ecotrack option is possible for consideration.

- Ms. Rothenberg: If the funds are awarded for all three projects, totaling \$730,000, is there a timeframe for use?
- Mr. Fenollosa: Inquired if the Capital funding had already approved. Mr. Connelly stated that it had been requested a month ago and is currently under review.
- Mr. Walker: Questioned if a CPA project could be altered if Capital was not approved. Mr. Connelly stated that the Commission had already voted on Capital. CPA is currently in the discussion phase.
- Ms. Garnett: Requested town mapping documents showing access points and signage to share with David Morgan before Thursday.
- Mr. Moore: Believes more money should be requested in the proposal. Would like to see the feasibility study cover park improvements as well as the Mountain Bike Project.
- Ms. Melofchik: Requested that consideration be given to restoration of the picnic tables at Menotomy and include ADA complaint tables that allow for wheelchair access. Also stated that an Environmental Impact Study and tree/plant inventory should be taken before moving forward with Hill's Hill as the project affects the heat islands and tree canopy. She wanted it noted that she is very opposed to the project.

Ms. Canniff made a motion to approve the 2024 CPA request, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg.

Roll call vote:

Ms. Rothenberg – YES

Ms. Canniff – YES

Mr. Walker – YES

Ms. Mayer – YES

Mr. Lasker – YES

Approved 5-0.

Basketball Court Discussion: The Commission discussed the need for more basketball courts in town due to the loss of the courts that had been located behind Arlington High School. Input from the community suggests a strong interest in designated pickleball courts that do not affect current tennis and basketball courts. Because pickleball courts have a small footprint it may be worthwhile to look at adding courts adjacent to the current basketball or tennis courts to create a multi-generational complex.

- Mr. Lasker: Noted that Robbins Farm provides a shared court and was created with the intention of being used as both a basketball and pickleball court. He also noted that street hockey and futsal groups would also benefit from sharing courts.
- Ms. Rothenberg: Suggested compiling data from the iPlay app used to reserve court time to determine how many individuals or groups are reserving for pickleball vs basketball. Mr. Connelly will get the data to share with the Commission. She also suggested the possibility of installing a basketball court in the lower field at Ottoson Middle School.
- Ms. Mayer: Noted that maintenance of the courts is not covered by CPA. She suggested the use of feasibility study funds to determine how to potentially expand the use of the town's existing courts.
- Mr. Fenollosa: Suggested installing a court at one of the smaller parks; Cutter, Locke, Waldo. Mr. Connelly suggested an assessment of the locations as they are very important to the abutting neighbors.
- Ms. Canniff: Commented that the removal of the Arlington High Basketball courts is a huge loss for the youth of Arlington. The courts were very well used.

The Commission will further discuss Parallel Park and Thompson Field as potential locations for additional courts.

Capital Project Updates:

- a. Spy and Parmenter Playgrounds – The weekly meeting with Ray Contracting will be held tomorrow, September 14, to discuss both projects. The Friends of Spy Pond have expressed concerns about the poured in place rubber surfacing being used. Mr. Connelly stated that poured in place is recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the governing body of playground safety. Use of the product has already been approved by the Commission and the Conservation Commission. The decision is final for this project.

Parmenter equipment has been installed. Spy Pond Equipment is being delivered next week. The retaining wall and ramp at Parmenter are complete. The subgrade and prep work is complete at Spy Pond.

- Mr. Lasker: Asked if the poured in place pathways would be completed before the temperature changes. Mr. Connelly assured the Commission that Parmenter would be completed before the temperature changes. Completion at Spy Pond depends on whether there will be delays in receiving and installing equipment.

- Ms. Mayer: Inquired about the ramp work and second entrance being added at Parmenter. Mr. Connelly will request more information.
- b. Robbins Playground – Six firms have submitted an RFP – KZLA, Weston & Sampson, Warner Larson, Kate Took, RDLA and Copley Wolffe. Mr. Connelly has shared the documents with the Commission for review. He requested that each Commission email him their top three choices to interview by the end of the week.
- c. Arlington Reservoir Phase II – The pathway has been prepped and work will begin Thursday or Friday of this week. Disturbed areas will be hydroseeded on September 19. Final signage is ready for installation. Some plants will have to be replaced next spring. The Commission commended the upkeep and continued watering.
 - Ms. Garnett also noted that she was impressed with the plant growth and watering efforts.
- d. Stratton, Pierce, Bishop ARPA Project – Mr. Connelly shared that JJ Fallon has been extremely accommodating and he is very impressed with their work.

Bishop is almost complete. Ropes will be installed next week. Final items include a playground inspection and sealcoating. The contractor will swap out the swings.

Stratton equipment installation will begin this week. Anticipated completion is by the end of October. The Commission discussed the success and the fast turnaround with the project, begun in July.

Pierce site prep is ongoing. Equipment delivery is expected on October 1. The Commission discussed laying mulch for use during the school year and schedule rubber installation in early summer 2023.

Site furnishings for all three locations are on backorder due to supply chain delays.

- Ms. Mayer asked about the use of binder in the mulch at Pierce. Mr. Connelly will get clarification from KZLA about how dropping temperatures, 45-50 degrees, could be a concern.
- e. Hurd Field – The project is moving fast and is coming in \$500K under budget. Cement pads were found under the grass near the shed and had to be removed. Trees will be pruned to allow for better lighting. It was determined that it was not ideal to keep the original fence posts along the bike path and only replace the mesh. Mr. Connelly is pricing the cost to replace the entire section. Lights will be ready at the end of September and sod will be laid in November.

Mr. Slotnick, co-chair of the Zero Waste Committee, presented a proposal on behalf of Arlington on Tap. In response to the proposal to ban the sale of bottled water as of November 1st, the committee is looking to install water bottle filling stations at town parks. \$50K has been earmarked in the state budget, with the support of State Representative Garballey and DPW head Mike Rademacher, to purchase water bottle filling stations. The committee would like to see them placed in high traffic community areas such as the Thorndike dog park, the bike way and along Mass Ave. Hurd Field was suggested as a pilot location because it is accessible to both users of the field and bike path. Mr. Slotnick has a meeting on Thursday with David Morgan to collaborate on an application for a \$50K CPA match. The initial \$50K is already in hand. Filling stations for water bottles price at around \$3000 while more complex units that include a water bubbler and dog bowl filler run around \$5500.

- Mr. Lasker: Pointed out that if the units were installed and fed off the irrigation water source, a backflow preventer would be needed. It would be difficult to place the units at Hurd due to the advanced stage of the project. He suggested choosing a pilot location that already has a water feed, such as a park that previously had a water fountain. Mr. Lasker also pointed out that the units would require winterization.
- Ms. Canniff: Inquired about the functionality of the water fountain installed at Waldo Park in 2019. Mr. Connelly stated that a plumber had been hired for occasional repairs. He also noted that the fountain at Hill's Hill Playground had been fixed four times this past summer. The existing fountains are prone to maintenance due to use and exposure to the elements.
- Mr. Connelly: Will speak to Mr. Rademacher about maintenance support.
- Ms. Mayer: Stated the need for a maintenance budget and commitment from DPW. She suggested including the Board of Health in future discussions, pointing out health risks of the "bubbler" feature. The drinking feature is also prone to vandalism. Ms. Mayer inquired which agency assumes the cost of the water?
- Ms. Garnett: Shared that the water used to feed the habitat garden was ultimately paid for by the taxpayers.
- Ms. Rothenberg: Expressed concern for public health. Since the pandemic, it is important to evaluate how these units could prevent spreading of illness and germs. She also suggested allocating a percentage of the \$50K to a 2 year maintenance plan.
- Mr. Fenollosa: Suggested locations frequented by cyclists; Kickstand Café, Uncle Sam's Park, and the Heights bus station.
- Mr. Ballin, worked on the proposal on behalf of Zero Waste Arlington: Stated that Concord, MA installed six units with CPA money in 2015 and reports very low maintenance. He suggested that a portion of the state funding be allocated for maintenance. The funding is unrestricted and could potentially be used with Sandy Pooler's approval.
- Ms. Melofchik: Suggested that the Commission look into the units used at End of the World in Hingham which have an overflow feature for filling dog balls rather than a separate spigot. She also requesting that the Commission consider shadow planting and to plant more trees to maximize cooling and the tree canopy.
- Ms. Canniff: Noted that the Commission has always passionately worked with the tree warden to incorporate additional tree planting in park and playground projects.

- f. Poets Corner – There is nothing new to report. Mr. Connelly will be meeting with Belmont Hill at the end of September.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Canniff made a motion to approve the minutes of August 9, 2022, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg.

Roll call vote:

Ms. Rothenberg – YES

Ms. Canniff – YES

Mr. Walker – YES

Ms. Mayer – YES

Mr. Lasker – YES

Approved 5-0.

Special Event Approval: Colleen McGrath requested approval for the annual Bark For Life event scheduled to be held at the Reservoir on October 30, 2022. The event will include a bake sale for fundraising purposes. Mr. Connelly advised for Ms. McGrath to contact the Board of Health.

- Ms. Rothenberg: Requested additional information about the individuals running the event and way Arlington was chosen. Ms. McGrath stated that several Arlington High School students were on the committee for the Relay for Life which is where the Bark for Life stemmed from. Many of the registered participants are Arlington residents and Arlington dog walking groups.

Mr. Walker made a motion to approve the Bark for Life special event request, seconded by Ms. Mayer.

Roll call vote:

Ms. Rothenberg – NAY

Ms. Canniff – NAY

Mr. Walker – YES

Ms. Mayer – YES

Mr. Lasker – YES

Approved 3-2.

Comments and Items for Future Meetings:

Mr. Connelly: Alan Jones has been invited to the next Commission meeting to discuss a proposed assessment and rejuvenation plan for Crusher Lot. The Commission discussed concerns about other groups presenting CPA requests for work on Recreation property.

- Ms. Mayer: CPA would require the Commissions endorsement before considering the request from an outside group. Requests made by the property owner are preferred.
- Ms. Rothenberg: Requested that Crusher Lot be discussed in the next cycle. The Commission is currently managing many projects.
- Mr. Lasker: The scope of Mr. Jones request is maintenance. CPA does not cover maintenance. Suggested fundraising for similar to what has been done by the Friends of Spy Pond. The group could come to the Commission for approval.

Ms. Canniff: Open Space will be sharing the current draft design at their booth at Town Day.

Ms. Mayer: Theresa Marzilli, the Community Outreach Coordinator, will be attending the next Commission meeting to introduce herself. Ms. Mayer also requested that Commissioners set up their town email accounts so that all Commissioners receive email correspondence from the public.

Correspondence Received: The Commission received correspondence regarding Hill's Hill from several Arlington residents including Sara Alfaro-Franco, Cheryl Marceau, Flynn Monks and Wynelle Evans.

New Business: Mr. Connelly reminded the Commission that the Arlington Town Day Road Race would be taking place on Saturday September 17, 2022, at the Reservoir. There will be food trucks and a DJ as well.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm, seconded by Ms. Canniff.

Roll call vote:

Ms. Rothenberg – YES

Ms. Canniff – YES

Mr. Walker – YES

Ms. Mayer – YES

Mr. Lasker – YES

Approved 5-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deanna Stacchi.